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Charles Keith stands outside the state prison, Wednesday, May 11, 2022, in Florence, Ariz., where inmate Clarence Dixon was scheduled for execution by lethal injection for his murder conviction in the killing of 21-year-old Arizona State University student Deana Bowdoin in 1978.

Associated Press

## Report: Executions continued decline but many 'botched'

By JUAN A. LOZANO  
Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Public support and use of the death penalty in 2022 continued its more than two-decade decline in the U.S., and many of the executions that were carried out during the year were "botched" or highly problematic, an annual report on capital punishment says.

There were 18 executions in the U.S. in

2022, the fewest in any pre-pandemic year since 1991. There were 11 executions last year. Outside of the pandemic years, the 20 death sentences handed out in 2022 were the fewest in any year in the U.S. in a half-century, according to the report by the Washington, D.C.-based Death Penalty Information Center.

Continued on Page 2

## Adult & Teen Challenge Aruba Foundation presenting different projects to fight addiction



## Director of Aruba House inaugurates Harold Munneke Library



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## Report: Executions continued decline but many 'botched'



The gurney in Huntsville, Texas, where inmates are strapped down to receive a lethal dose of drugs, is shown May 27, 2008.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

"All the indicators point to the continuing decline in capital punishment and the movement away from the death penalty is durable," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the nonprofit, which takes no position on capital punishment but has criticized the way states carry out executions.

In the U.S., 37 states have abolished the death penalty or not carried out an execution in more than a decade. On Tuesday, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown commuted the sentences of all 17 of the state's death row inmates to life in prison without parole. Oregon last executed a prisoner in 1997. There have been no federal executions since January 2021 following a historic use of capital punishment by the Trump administration. In July 2021, the Justice Department imposed a moratorium on federal executions.

The report called 2022 the "Year of the Botched Execution" as seven of the 20 execution attempts in the U.S. were visibly problematic or took an inordinate amount of time. That prompted some states to put them on hold so processes and protocols could be reviewed.

Significant problems were reported with all three of Arizona's executions as corrections officers struggled to find suitable veins for IV lines to deliver the lethal injection.

In Alabama, Gov. Kay Ivey ordered a "top-to-bottom" review of the state's capital punishment system last month after three failed lethal injections, including two in 2022 involving problems with intravenous lines used to administer the drugs.

Other concerns with executions included a South Carolina judge's ruling in September that called unconstitutional the state's newly created execution

firing squad, as well as its use of the electric chair. The state's Supreme Court is set to hear arguments on the issue next month.

In April, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee halted lethal injections in his state because the drugs used in executions hadn't been tested. The oversight had forced Lee to abruptly halt plans to execute inmate Oscar Smith, an hour before he was to die last April.

Dunham said he believes ongoing issues with botched executions or reviews of execution protocols by states is helping to erode public support of capital punishment. Gallup polling shows public support of the death penalty has steadily dropped in the last 28 years, falling from 80% in 1994 to 55% this year. "There are very few states that are trying to carry out the death penalty. But they are acting in ways that ... their conduct is undermining public confidence that states can be trusted with

the death penalty," Dunham said.

While five of the 18 executions that took place in 2022 were in Texas, that is well below what the nation's busiest capital punishment state has seen historically. In 2000, Texas executions reached a high of 40, according to this year's annual report by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Kristin Houlié Cuellar, the coalition's executive director, said she believes Texas' "era of excessive use of the death penalty is gone" as prosecutors will continue to instead use lengthy prison sentences to hold people accountable.

Deborah Denno, a law professor at Fordham University in New York, said she's not surprised by the declining use and public support of capital punishment. She cites as reasons: more people learning about the various problems in carrying out executions, doubts about whether it deters

crime and a growing number of exonerations of inmates.

"Any sort of prediction about the future would suggest the death penalty is going to be limited to a few states. With time, there will be growing pressure in those states to abolish the death penalty," Denno said.

Dunham said he believes the number of botched executions has contributed significantly to the movement among lawmakers, particularly conservatives, to express doubts about the death penalty.

In Oklahoma, GOP state Rep. Kevin McDugle, a self-described death-penalty supporter, became one of the strongest advocates for death row inmate Richard Glossip after concerns were raised about lost or destroyed evidence and police bias. Glossip's execution was delayed last month.

In Texas, GOP state Rep. Jeff Leach helped lead a bipartisan group of lawmakers who believe new evidence shows death row inmate Melissa Lucio didn't fatally beat her daughter. Leach and some of the lawmakers visited Lucio on death row before her execution was delayed in April. In an interview with The Associated Press earlier this year, Leach said he hopes lawmakers can work to make sure "there's no chance that we're executing an innocent Texan."

"To say I'm wrestling with the very existence of the death penalty in Texas would be a dramatic understatement," Leach said. Michael Benza, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, said the shifting political environment around the death penalty has made it easier for policymakers to have meaningful discussions about capital punishment.

"And they have trouble with it when they really do look at what is happening. I think politicians are wondering whether or not this is in fact the right thing to be doing," Benza said. □

# Pentagon has received 'several hundreds' of new UFO reports

By TARA COPP

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new Pentagon office set up to track reports of unidentified flying objects has received "several hundreds" of new reports, but no evidence so far of alien life, the agency's leadership told reporters Friday.

The All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) was set up in July and is responsible for not only tracking unidentified objects in the sky, but also underwater or in space — or potentially an object that has the ability to move from one domain to the next.

The office was established following more than a year of attention on unidentified flying objects that military pilots have observed but have sometimes been reluctant to report due to fear of stigma.

In June 2021 the Office of the Director of National Intelligence reported that between 2004 and 2021, there were 144 such encounters, 80 of which were captured on multiple sensors.

Since then, "we've had lots more reporting," said anomaly office director Sean Kirkpatrick. When asked to quantify the



The Pentagon is seen from Air Force One as it flies over Washington, March 2, 2022.

Associated Press

amount, Kirkpatrick said "several hundreds."

An updated report from the Director of National Intelligence that will provide specific figures on new reports received since 2021 is expected by the end of the year, the officials said.

The office was set up not only to examine the question of whether there's extraterrestrial life, but also because of the security risk posed by so many encounters with unknown flying ob-

jects by military installations or military aircraft.

This May, Congress held its first hearing in more than half a century on the topic, with multiple members expressing concern that whether or not the objects are alien or potentially new, unknown technology being flown by China, Russia or another potential adversary, the unknown creates a security risk.

So far, "we have not seen anything, and we're still

very early on, that would lead us to believe that any of the objects that we have seen are of alien origin," said Ronald Moultrie, under secretary of defense for intelligence and security.

"Any unauthorized system in our airspace we deem as a threat to safety." The office is also working on ways to improve its ability to identify unknown objects, such as by recalibrating sensors that may be focused just on known

adversary aircraft or drone signatures, Moultrie said.

One reason for the hundreds of additional reports coming in may be the outreach the department has done to destigmatize reporting potential encounters. Each service has also established its own reporting processes, Kirkpatrick said.

Beyond unidentifiable objects, there's a lot of new technology such as future stealth bombers and stealth fighters, drones and hypersonic missiles being fielded by both the U.S. and China that could be mistaken for a UFO. Kirkpatrick said the new office has been coordinating with the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community to get the signatures of U.S. technology in order to rule out those aircraft or drones. "We are setting up very clear mechanisms with our blue programs, both our DOD and IC programs, to deconflict any observations that come in with blue activities, and ensure that we weed those out and identify those fairly early on," Kirkpatrick said, referring to the "blue" U.S. aircraft programs in operation by the Pentagon or intelligence agencies. □

# Biden signs bill to keep government open through Dec. 23

By KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden signed leg-

islation Friday to fund the government for an additional week as lawmakers race to finish work on a full-

year spending package before they head home for the holidays and a new Congress is sworn in.

Congress in September passed a bill to keep the government running through midnight Friday. The latest extension funds federal agencies through Dec. 23. It passed the Senate on Thursday evening by a vote of 71-19.

"Negotiations keep trending in the right direction, but we still have a lot of work left to do and not enough time to do it, unless we extend government funding for another week," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in urging lawmakers to support the stopgap

measure. The roughly \$1.7 trillion package being negotiated would finance the day-to-day operations of government agencies for the current fiscal year that began Oct. 1. Federal spending on programs such as Social Security and Medicare is not part of the annual appropriations process and is not included in the package.

House Republicans overwhelmingly have called for a longer-term extension into early next year so they could have a bigger role in setting spending levels for the agencies. Democrats in the House were able to advance the bill with little GOP support earlier this week.

But Sen. Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the Senate, has made the case that passing a full-year spending bill this Congress is better than the alternatives because it ensures a sizable increase in spending for defense.

"If a truly bipartisan full-year bill without poison pills is ready for final Senate passage by late next week, I'll support it for our Armed Forces," McConnell said Wednesday. "Otherwise, we'll be passing a short-term continuing resolution into the new year."

Some Senate Republicans disagreed with efforts to pass a spending bill before House Republicans could take charge. □



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., emerges from a closed-door meeting with fellow Democrats before speaking with reporters, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.

Associated Press

## New York bans pet stores from selling cats, dogs, rabbits

By **MAYSOON KHAN**  
Associated Press/Report for America

**ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)** — New York on Thursday became the latest state to ban the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits in pet stores in an attempt to target commercial breeding operations decried by critics as "puppy mills."

The new law, which was signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul and takes effect in 2024, lets pet shops work instead with shelters to offer rescued or abandoned animals up for adoption.

"This is a very big deal. New York tends to be a big purchaser and profiteer of these mills, and we are trying to cut off the demand at a retail level," said Sen. Michael Gianaris, a Democrat.

He added that the puppy mill industry treats animals "like commodities" and said "there is no pet store not affected."

Pet shops have argued that the law will do nothing to shut down out-of-state breeders or increase their standards of care and said it would result in the closures of the dozens of pet stores remaining in New York.

California enacted a similar law in 2017, becoming the first state to ban such sales. While that law requires pet



Puppies play in a cage at a pet store in Columbia, Md., Aug. 26, 2019.

Associated Press

stores to work with animal shelters or rescue operations, like New York is doing now, it does not regulate sales by private breeders. A handful of states followed. In 2020, Maryland banned the sale of cats and dogs in pet stores, triggering pushback from shop owners and breeders who challenged the measure in court. A year later Illinois barred pet shops from selling commercially raised puppies and kittens.

In New York, pet advocacy groups have long called for a full shutdown of facilities that raise and sell animals for profit, saying animals are raised in inhumane conditions before they are shipped off to stores.

Emilio Ortiz, a manager at Citipups pet shop in New York City, said the new law could serve as a death sentence for the business he's worked at for more than a decade.

"Ninety percent of our busi-

ness is selling dogs. We're not going to survive this," said Ortiz, who considers the ban unfair to stores that work with responsible breeders. "They're closing the good actors along with the bad actors."

Jessica Selmer, president of People United to Protect Pet Integrity, a New York coalition of pet store owners, called the law "careless" and "counterproductive" and said she hopes the governor will "consider leg-

islative remedies to some of the pitfalls of the bill."

The new law will not affect at-home breeders who sell animals born and raised on their property.

Lisa Haney, who breeds dogs at her Buffalo home alongside her husband, said she supports the law.

"One pet store near me, they get dogs from all over the Midwest and different large facilities, and you have no idea where they come from and who the breeder is. People are really clueless and take the puppy," Haney said.

Her business, Cavapoo Kennels, partly focuses on breeding hypoallergenic dogs for people who have allergies, and her business model operates on a need basis. The waitlist runs from six to 12 months, ensuring each dog ends up in a home.

Gianaris said the law will allow buyers to be more conscious of where their pets come from.

"If a consumer went to a mill and saw the awful conditions, they wouldn't buy these animals," he said.

"Dealing with a breeder allows people to see where their dog comes from, and it cuts off the middlemen that serve as a way to wash off the awful activities that take place at the mill." □

## Starbucks workers begin 3-day walkout at 100 US stores



Starbucks workers and supporters hold a banner that reads "strike" in front of a giant inflatable rat during the "Unfair Labor Practice Strike" in St. Paul, Minn. on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

By **DEE-ANN DURBIN**  
AP Business Writer

Starbucks workers around the U.S. are planning a three-day strike starting Fri-

day as part of their effort to unionize the coffee chain's stores.

More than 1,000 baristas at 100 stores are planning

to walk out, according to Starbucks Workers United, the labor group organizing the effort. The strike will be the longest in the year-old unionization campaign.

The union says it expects the strike will shutter some stores entirely; at others, managers or other workers may keep the stores open. Starbucks, which opposes the unionization effort, said Friday that the strike was having a limited impact on its stores and most remained open.

"We remain focused on working together and engaging meaningfully and directly with the union to make Starbucks a company that works for everyone, and we urge Workers Unit-

ed to uphold their promises to partners by moving the bargaining process forward," the company said in a statement.

This is the second major strike in a month by Starbucks' U.S. workers. On Nov. 17, workers at 110 Starbucks stores held a one-day walkout. That effort coincided with Starbucks' annual Red Cup Day, when the company gives reusable cups to customers who order a holiday drink. At a Starbucks in Chicago, barista Finn Dorris and shift supervisor Teddy Hoffman were picketing in the snow on Friday, waving to cars that were honking in support. Both said the company has been cutting their hours

ahead of the holidays.

"We have had stores close and absorbed partners, which makes it harder to stretch the hours that we are allotted between brand new partners," said Dorris, who prefers to work 20-25 hours per week but lately has been scheduled to work 10.

Hoffman wants the company to treat employees more respectfully.

"The more of us who stand together, the more we send a message to Starbucks, and also each other, and even people who don't work at Starbucks, that there are folks who aren't going to tolerate being abused by their employer," Hoffman said. □

# Caribbean divided as Netherlands mulls slavery apology

By GEROLD ROZENBLAD  
and DÁNICA COTO  
Associated Press

**PARAMARIBO, Suriname (AP)** — Dutch colonizers kidnapped men, women and children and enslaved them on plantations growing sugar, coffee and other goods that built wealth at the price of misery. On Monday, the Netherlands is expected to become one of the few nations to apologize for its role in slavery. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte plans to speak in the Netherlands as members of his Cabinet give speeches in seven former Caribbean colonies, including Suriname. Symbolism around crimes against humanity is controversial everywhere, and debates over Monday's ceremonies are roiling Suriname and other Caribbean countries.

In Suriname, activists and officials say they have not been asked for input about the apology, and that's a reflection of a Dutch colonial attitude. What's really needed, they say, is compensation.

In 2013, the Caribbean trade bloc known as Caricom made a list of requests including that European governments formally apologize and create a repatriation program for those who wish to return to their homeland, which has not happened.

"We are still feeling the effects of that period, so some financial support



**Wreath laying at the National Slavery Monument after Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema apologized for the involvement of the city's rulers in the slave trade during a nationally televised annual ceremony in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Thursday, July 1, 2021.**

Associated Press

would be welcome," said Orlando Daniel, a 46-year-old security guard and a descendant of slaves.

Suriname is an ethnically diverse country where roughly 60% of its 630,000 inhabitants live below the poverty line and 22% identify as Maroon ancestors of slaves who escaped and established their own communities. The Dutch first became involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the late 1500s but did not become a major trader until the mid-1600s, when they seized Portuguese fortresses along Africa's west coast and plantations in northeastern Brazil. Eventually,

the Dutch West India Company became the largest trans-Atlantic slave trader, said Karwan Fatah-Black, an expert in Dutch colonial history and an assistant professor at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Hundreds of thousands of people were branded and forced to work in plantations in Suriname and other colonies.

Portugal became the first European country to buy slaves in West Africa with help from the Catholic Church in the 1400s, followed by Spain. Some experts argue that large-scale sugar production in what is now Brazil then gave rise

to the Atlantic slave trade that saw an estimated 12 million Africans transported to the Caribbean and the Americas over some 400 years, with at least 1 million dying en route.

Britain was among the first countries to ban the slave trade, in 1807. Dutch slavery continued until 1863.

If, as expected, the government issues a formal apology on Monday, it will put the Netherlands, which has a long history of progressive thinking and liberal laws, in the vanguard of nations and global institutions seeking to atone for their roles in historical horrors.

In 2018, Denmark apolo-

gized to Ghana, which it colonized from the mid-17th century to the mid-19th century. In June, King Philippe of Belgium expressed "deepest regrets" for abuses in Congo. In 1992, Pope John Paul II apologized for the church's role in slavery. Americans have had emotionally charged fights over taking down statues of slaveholders in the South.

A Dutch government-appointed board issued a report last year saying that "today's institutional racism cannot be seen separately from centuries of slavery and colonialism."

Politicians and civil-society organizations in Suriname say that July 1, 2023 would be a more appropriate date for the apology ceremony because it marks 160 years since the abolition of slavery in the country.

"Why the rush?" asked Baryl Biekman, chair of the Netherlands-based National Platform for Slavery Past. Johan Roozer, chairman of Suriname's National Slavery Past Committee, said that Legal Protections Minister Franc Weerwind, who has slave ancestors and is visiting Suriname Monday, should also be given reparations.

Romeo Bronne, a 58-year-old businessman in Suriname, said an apology is needed, but he wants to hear it from the king of the Netherlands or its prime minister. □

## Over 15,000 in Brussels demand protection from high prices



**Union workers wear signs which read 'block the prices, France does it' during a demonstration in Brussels, Friday, Dec. 16, 2022.**

Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — Over 15,000 demonstrators braved the bitter cold in Brussels Friday to call for more measures to shield them from high energy prices and better pay to counter runaway inflation. Because of the protest backed by the three main unions, public services were affected throughout Belgium, especially rail and subway systems in and around the capital and Brussels international airport. With people increas-

ingly under pressure from high prices, the unions demanded pay increases at a time when companies such as energy giants are making massive profits. They seek a freeze in energy prices and increased taxation on capital.

"We won't stop unless workers get what they deserve," the unions said in a statement.

Police estimated the crowd walking in freezing temperatures through the capital at 16,500. □

# U.N.: Thousands in West, Central Africa could face starvation

By **SAM MEDNICK**  
Associated Press

**DAKAR, Senegal (AP)** — More than 25,000 people could face starvation in conflict-plagued parts of West Africa next year, a United Nations official warned Friday.

Federico Doehner of the World Food Program said violence and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine are largely driving the threat to people in Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso.

"One of the most striking things is that where we already had issues with severe food insecurity last year, this year we're seeing a further deterioration" Doehner said while presenting findings of the latest joint U.N. food security report in Dakar, Senegal.

The cross-border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger is the epicenter of West Africa's escalating humanitarian crisis, which is compounded by climate change, severe floods and droughts placing more than 10 million people in need of assistance, the U.N. said in a statement this week.



Internally displaced people wait for aid in Djibo, Burkina Faso, on May 26, 2022.

Associated Press

Doehner said nearly 80% of people facing catastrophic hunger - some 20,000 - are in Burkina Faso's Sahel region, where jihadis linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have besieged cities and cut off assistance. Residents of the city of Djibo have been blockaded for months, unable to access their farms.

"We only get food when convoys come. Unfortunately, they are not com-

ing on a regular basis," Sidi Dicko, a resident of Djibo, told The Associated Press by phone. "We pray for God to help us out of this situation."

Dicko said the little food that arrives gets through with military convoys, which often are attacked on the road. Aid groups need to use helicopters to transport food, which is costly.

Doehner said that in Mali, where violence has been

ongoing for a decade, 1,700 people will face catastrophic levels of hunger. Displaced people there say they lack jobs and can't afford food. "Before (the violence), I would go to the market to work and bring back food for my family," Oumar Barry said, speaking to The Associated Press from a camp in Mopti city where he shelters with his 10 children.

His family eats twice a day

now instead of three times, Barry said.

Other regional nations that aren't plagued by the same levels of violence also face hunger problems. In the last quarter of the year, Benin, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo experienced a 20% increase in food insecurity compared with 2021, according to the food security report. Some 25 million people in Nigeria face moderate or worse food insecurity, the report states. Converging pressures of economic recession, growing youth populations in need of jobs and the climate crisis leave poor people living from hand to mouth, said Alex de Waal, executive director for the U.S.-based World Peace Foundation. "On top of this, armed conflict and the cynical use of hunger as a weapon pushes communities into outright famine," he said.

But funding has remained the same, said Benedetta Di Cintio, an official with the U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs who deals with West Africa. □

## Report: World's coal use creeps to new high in 2022

By **FRANK JORDANS**  
Associated Press

**BERLIN (AP)** — Coal use across the world is set to reach a new record this year amid persistently high demand for the heavily polluting fossil fuel, the International Energy Agency said Friday.

The Paris-based agency said in a new report that while coal use grew by only 1.2% in 2022, the increase pushed it to all-time high of more than 8 billion metric tons, beating the previous record set in 2013.

"The world's coal consumption will remain at similar levels in the following years in the absence of stronger efforts to accelerate the

transition to clean energy," the agency said, noting that "robust demand" in emerging Asian economies would offset declining use in mature markets.

"This means coal will continue to be the global energy system's largest single source of carbon dioxide emissions by far," the IAE said. The use of coal and other fossil fuels needs to be cut drastically to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) this century. Experts say the ambitious target, which governments agreed to in the 2015 Paris climate accord, will be hard to meet given that average temperatures world-

wide have already risen by 1.2 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times.

The IEA said higher prices for natural gas due to Russia's war in Ukraine have led to increased reliance on coal for generating power. "The world is close to a peak in fossil fuel use, with coal set to be the first to decline, but we are not there yet," Keisuke Sadamori, the agency's director of energy markets and security, said. Coal use is likely to decline as countries deploy more renewable energy sources, he said. But China, the world's biggest consumer of coal, said recently that it plans to boost production through



A bucket wheel excavator is mining coal at the Garzweiler open-cast coal mine with wind turbines in the background in Luetzerath, Germany, on Nov. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

2025 to avoid a repeat of last year's power shortages. And in Europe, which is scrambling to replace Russian energy supplies following the invasion of Ukraine, some countries have reopened shuttered coal-fired power plants. In an effort to curb grow-

ing coal use in emerging economies, South Africa, Indonesia and Vietnam have signed investment agreements with rich partner countries over the past year that will help them boost efforts to shift to renewable sources such as wind and solar. □

## Adult & Teen Challenge Aruba Foundation presenting different projects to fight addiction

**ORANJESTAD –** The problem of addiction is big in Aruba and continues growing through the years. Different organizations and foundations are dedicated to offering help and rehabilitation to people fighting addiction. Adult & Teen Challenge Aruba Foundation is part of this group offering help. President of the foundation, Ivone Simon Andrade explained the work done by the foundation.

Adult & Teen Challenge is a global program existing around the world for 62 years. Adult & Teen Challenge Aruba Foundation exists for 20 years on Aruba, and it is a vocational training center for people entering a drug rehabilitation program, so they can receive help and guidance to reintegrate back into society and become contributing members of society.

Simon Andrade explained that since five years ago the foundation began with the vision and mission of establishing rehabilitation and recovery centers for people fighting addiction problems, be it drugs or alcohol, or mental health problems like depression.

The rehabilitation and recovery program consists of twelve months, during which the person deciding to enter the program receives help and guidance through specific lessons to help them change their way of thinking, so that they can become contributing members to society and good people for their families.

"Our very important goal is family restoration. Most of the times, people battling addiction are already parents, mothers or fathers, and for us it is important as a foundation helping them to help them integrate back into their families", Simon Andrade indicated.

The foundation also offers a daily program, where the client spends the day at the program, receiving



guidance and help to rehabilitate, and then they go back to their family.

The foundation has expansion projects, and one of them is the Super Thrift Store that recently opened. Aside from people making the decision to enter the program receiving lessons on changing their attitude, they also receive mentorship and guidance throughout the day.

Simon Andrade explained that the Super Thrift Store project has two functions. One of these is to teach the person to work again, and teach them norms and values in a practical day. The

person goes and does his normal practice in the job area, while receiving guidance on what is the best way to follow life's rules and enter back into society. "After completing the program when they go searching for a job, they already know norms and values, respect for authority, all this is part of the program", Simon Andrade added.

At the same time, this center is the way how the foundation keeps itself afloat financially. It is a store with second-hand clothes and items and everything sold is donated by the community; this way the community also contributes to help

the foundation cover their monthly operational costs.

Simon Andrade commented that they have different projects. Right now, the foundation has a men center and a women center, but these have a very small capacity. They are counting on help from the community to receive the necessary funds to relocate these centers.

"There is great need in Aruba, and all existing centers are never enough because you need a bigger place. For us as well, our focus for 2023 and 2024 is to expand the centers both for men and women to receive as many students as possible

for our program", she pointed out.

She said that to do this, they need more funds. Each project on its own costs about 450,000 florins, so it will cost a total of 900,000 florins to relocate and expand the men and women's centers. This to accommodate twelve persons in each center as well as operational costs. "In order for us to achieve this, we really need help from the community", she emphasized.

Adult & Teen Challenge Foundation is a non-profit. People wishing to help can do this in different ways: donating funds directly to the bank account of the foundation; donating articles of clothing, shoes, home-ware, furniture, electronics, etc to the store, and the foundation sells these at a very affordable price; donations can be made to the store, but there is also a blue container on the Boulevard where people can also leave donations.

"The store would not be possible without help from the community, and it is a project with such a big impact. We are very thankful to the community of Aruba for believing in the project since the start", Simon Andrade said.

She added that currently in the expansion phase they need more help to continue providing help to each person that needs help and guidance for a positive transformation. Adult & Teen Challenge can help them reintegrate back into their families and into society as people free of addiction and productive, adding great value to society.

"The Super Thrift Store project that now has relocated to Certified Mall is a form of circular economy, it is sustainable, and most importantly it helps change lives, thus its impact in the community is immense", she finalized. □



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## Kidpreneur\$ Bazaar

ORANJESTAD – On Saturday, December 17, 2022, the Kidpreneur\$ Bazaar organized by Idea-Aruba takes place at Plaza Daniel Leo from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Children and young entrepreneurs will sell handmade products, Christmas decorations, paintings, sweets, and much more during this event.

A Dino Jump, popcorn, and cotton Candy are also available for the children on Plaza Daniel Leo.

Parents whose children want to participate may contact Louella Croes at [L.croes@deaci.aw](mailto:L.croes@deaci.aw).

### Parking

The area behind Mango Store and the parking lot next to Bon Bini Bazaar will have extra illumination. They will also have control conducted by foot to guarantee the security of the cars parked in these areas.

Parking is free after 5.00 p.m., including the yellow parking spaces. □



## Erasmus+ Project for Youth Workers in Aruba



Oranjestad - From November 28 till December 7, 2022 Centro pa Desaroyo di Aruba hosted an Erasmus+ Training course that gathered youth workers from Europe and Caribbean islands. The goal for the participants, coming from 20 different organizations, was to learn about youth work competences, methods and tools to work and engage with youth in their local communities, exchange best practices and develop new projects.

The training course named "Creation, Reflection and Education for Community Empowerment (CRECE)" was a unique opportunity to develop partnerships between organizations that work with youth from different countries, build their capacity to work in international environment and create a space to exchange knowledge and learn more about Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

The participants wrote articles to share their experiences and we'll share some of their testimonials with you.

'Young people are the co-creator of the present', quoting one of my trainers, we as youth workers stand in the frontline to guide, coach and support our youngsters, listen to them and include them. In order to help them 'Create' programs for them, it is key to 'Reflect' on their needs

first before releasing any form of further Education to Empower them. As a youth worker, I experienced this active training tour.'

Chulyta Jubitana, Caribbean Education and Cultural Foundation from St. Maarten 'This was my first time experiencing an Erasmus+ program, which took place on Aruba for a duration of 9 days. I am so grateful that I was given the opportunity to attend this training course where I was able to meet and bond with people from different countries and nationalities. I gained insights into what Youth Work entails in different EU countries and learned about new, impactful tools that I myself can use with the youth within my organization.'

Chisela Vasquez Santos, Heart-Centered Leader-

ship Foundation from Aruba 'Erasmus+ is a great opportunity for young people to explore their possibilities and to think outside of the box. Meeting new cultures in a non-formal environment and becoming more aware of the different approaches to the challenges that we are all facing, empowers you to become a more active member in society.

In a long turn, this could provide significant changes in everyday life of your local community. Taking part in activities in Erasmus+ program fosters you to see the bigger picture of the realities around you, but also brings a fresh look and new ways of dealing with situations that you see as obstacles in a particular moment in life. Accept the possibility and explore it-you won't regret.' □



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## E-Toko congratulates Ayaka di Oro winner

The winner of the Antillian culinary competition 'buskando e ayaka di oro' 2022 is Crystal Haseh. During the well-attended first edition of the Antillean Christmas market, this ayaka maker was awarded the title of best ayaka maker in the Netherlands and Belgium.

The winner of buskando e ayaka di Oro 2022 is Crystal Haseh. By winning this gastronomic competition, her ayaka is officially the best ayaka of the Netherlands and Belgium. An ayaka is a delicacy eaten around Christmas time on the ABC-Islands. E-Toko, the main spon-



sor of the event, also provided the reward. E-Toko's director Jason Steba and head of marketing Gabriel Schobbe presented

the prize to the winner. The prize consisted of a winner's certificate, a cash prize of € 250 and the opportunity to sell ayakas

via E-Toko's online store.

The ayakas were judged on: shape, consistency, sauce, taste and content

of the ayakas. Participants were judged on stage by a jury panel consisting of three chefs: Jurino Ignacio, Dayèhne Nowels and Tyron Vrutaal. Crystal from "ayaka di oma" won the Antillean culinary contest and the title "Ayaka di Oro". Freely translated: Golden ayaka. "We conceived and organized this event with the idea of giving ayaka makers a platform to connect with ayaka lovers and to settle the discussion at the office about who has the tastiest ayaka," says Jason Steba, director of E-Toko. Next year "Buskando e ayaka di oro" will take place again. □

## The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors on the island

Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation and to say 'Masha Danki' to persons whom have visited Aruba for over 20 years consecutively.

This time, I was given the wonderful pleasure to honor Mr. Richard & Mrs. Rebecca Albert and their wonderful daughter Ashley Winnett from Missouri, United states. It is incredibly beautiful to see that Aruba has so many loyal visitors, and we ensure to always

make them feel welcomed and appreciated whenever they visit us in Aruba. This lovely family stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, its peacefulness and beauty, its safety, its variety of foods, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to them. Ms. Richardson together with the representatives of the Playa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



## Aruba's underwater wonderland



**ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.**

### Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you

will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

### Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded



the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

### Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, espe-

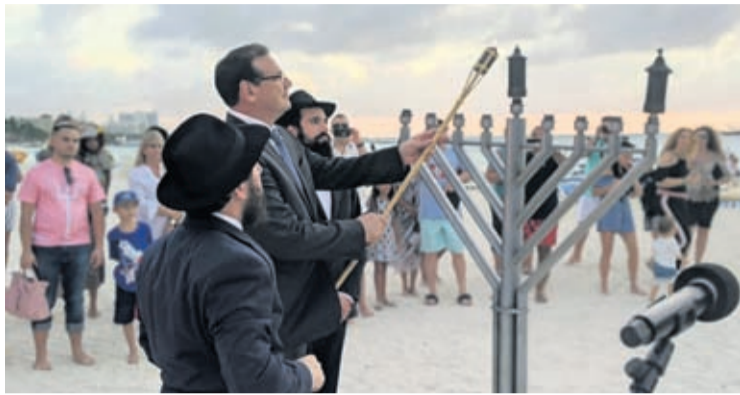
cially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

### Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □



# Chabad of Aruba is preparing for Chanukah with public Menorahs all over the island



**The Jewish eight day holiday of Chanukah begins on Sunday evening (December 18th) and Chabad plans to kick off the most celebrated Jewish holiday with a beautiful public Menorah Lighting Ceremony at the Ritz-Carlton Aruba.**

All are invited to join at the Ritz-Carlton beach-front at 5:30pm to watch the first candle being lit. Lively music will be played and delicious latkes and jelly donuts (traditional Chanukah foods) will be served.

Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, begins this year on the evening of Sunday, December 18th and concludes the evening of Sunday, December 25th. It's a holiday with a universal message of religious free-

dom, celebrating the victory of a militarily weak Jewish people who defeated the Syrian Greeks who had overrun ancient Israel and sought to impose restrictions on the Jewish way of life and prohibit religious freedom.

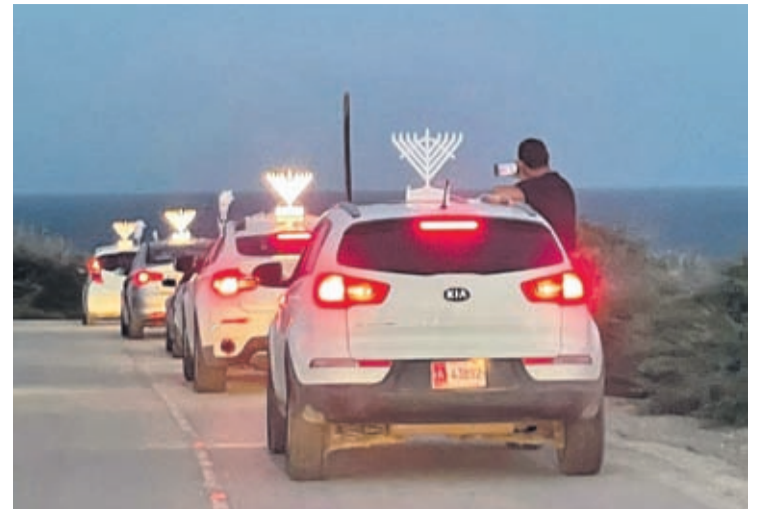
Chabad will be taking the joy of Chanukah all around Aruba this coming week with a full schedule of events for all ages. Each night- the public Menorah will be lit at a different location (see below), culminating with a grand Chanukah Concert with NY singer Yoni Z on the eighth night.

"The message of Chanukah is the message of light," said Rabbi Ahron Blasberg, director of Chabad Aruba. "The nature of light is that it is always victorious over

darkness. A small amount of light dispels a lot of darkness. This message is ever relevant especially in these days where there is so much darkness in the world and every day brings news of new hate crimes. Let's light our spiritual torches and share our light. Another act of goodness and kindness, another act of light, can make all the difference."

This year's public menorah lighting carries added significance as Jewish communities worldwide celebrate the Year of Hakhel or "Gathering," a once-in-seven-years Jewish tradition. The marking of this special occasion is part of the reason Chaba Aruba is offering Chanukah concert and many public Menorahs lightings and is expecting record crowds at the menorah-lighting this year.

"Unity is what makes a strong community," said Rabbi Ahron Blasberg. "Hakhel is a time for us to tune in to this, because together we can accomplish great things. There is no greater display of the literal light it is in our power to bring into the world than to



gather together and light the menorah. This is what the world needs."

For more information about Chanukah visit [www.JewishAruba.com/Chanukah](http://www.JewishAruba.com/Chanukah)

Night #1: December 18th at 5:30pm candle lighting ceremony at the Ritz-Carlton Aruba beach front

Night # 2: December 19th at 6pm Car Menorah parade leaving from the California Lighthouse [www.JewishAruba.com/parade](http://www.JewishAruba.com/parade)

Night # 3: December 20th at 5.30pm candle lighting ceremony at Eagle Beach opposite La Cabana Beach Resort

Night #4: December 21st at 5:30pm candle lighting ceremony at The Playa Linda Beach Resort Pool Deck

Night #5: December 22nd candle lighting ceremony at 5:30pm at the Marriott Ocean Club (outside the lobby)

Night # 6: December 23rd Shabbat at Chabad (RSVP [www.jewisharuba.com/Shabbat](http://www.jewisharuba.com/Shabbat))

Night # 7: December 24th at 8pm Havdalla and candle lighting at Chabad

Night # 8: December 25th at 7pm ~ Chanukah Hakhel Concert with the Yoni Z at the Hyatt Regency Parking Lot (VIP tickets [www.jewisharuba.com/vip](http://www.jewisharuba.com/vip)) ALL WELCOME!

Thank you to our sponsors: A special shout out to these sponsors who are making all the Chanukah events possible and free for the public: Caribbean Mercantile Bank (CMB), Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort and Casino, Ben Real Estate Services, Diamonds International Aruba, Daher Residence, 4D Photo Bar, Do-It Center, Cigar Emporium, Superfood Plaza, Digital View and MayDragon Fly Marketing. □

# Director of Aruba House inaugurates of Harold Munneke Library

**THE HAGUE – At the Haagse Hogeschool a special ceremony took place on the 15th of December, Day of the Kingdom (Koninkrijksdag), during which interim director of Aruba House,**

**drs. Glenda Hernandez inaugurated the mr. dr. Harold Munneke Library.**

On this occasion, Mrs. Hernandez said she is honored to be part of the ceremony.



ny. "Mainly if we see the unique and close relationship between Harold Munneke and Aruba. He made a big contribution to Aruba's Constitution. His interest and passion for the islands in the Dutch Caribbean, particularly Caribbean political rights, is enormous. His contribution to Minor Koningrijkszaken

showed his involvement with everything regarding the Kingdom of the Netherlands. That Mr. Munneke made his literature collection available, and that Haagse Hogeschool created a special place for it, is something to be admired. This makes it possible for the Kingdom of the Netherlands to continue living

under a future generation", Glenda Hernandez said.

Following her speech, Mrs. Hernandez and Mr. Munneke cut the ribbon and this way made the inauguration official.

Photographs are courtesy of Aruba House. □

**CROSSWORD**

By THOMAS JOSEPH

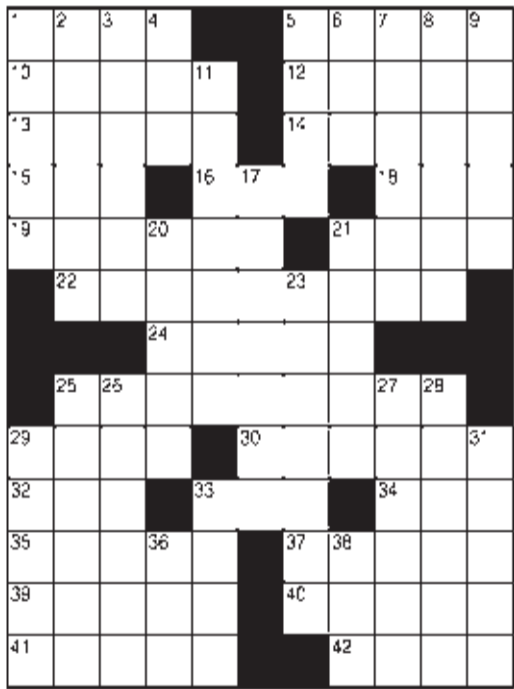
- ACROSS**
- 41 Good judgment
  - 1 Honey bunch
  - 5 Cuff site
  - 10 Knight wear
  - 12 Heart outlet
  - 13 Slatelty
  - 14 Car parts
  - 15 Put away
  - 16 Opposite of post-
  - 18 Bolt partner
  - 19 Petite
  - 21 Monopoly pair
  - 22 "Amsterdam" co-star
  - 24 Took steps
  - 25 "La La Land" co-star
  - 29 Thunder sound
  - 30 Bearlike
  - 32 Galley item
  - 33 Gorilla, for one
  - 34 Garage sight
  - 35 Annoys
  - 37 Fragrance
  - 39 Potato dumpling
  - 40 Floor squares

- DOWN**
- 1 Predictably trite
  - 2 Hot
  - 3 Davidtz of "Mansfield Park"
  - 4 Note after fa
  - 5 Walk through water
  - 6 Milne youngster
  - 7 Sly, in a way
  - 8 Hit
  - 9 Refinement



Yesterday's answer

- 11 Copy
- 17 Gathers
- 20 Chaplin
- 21 Nitwits
- 23 Fall back
- 25 Galahad's
- 26 Game fish
- 27 Kidman
- 28 Canine coat
- 29 Bottle toppers
- 31 Wipe away
- 33 Tennis great
- 36 Snaky Arthur
- 38 Tear shape



12-17

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-17

**CRYPTOQUOTE**

GUD BSPBDS SDQBPHQD, TQ  
UTHMWWTU GDTXUDQ, ZQ HPG  
GP XMSQD GUD KTSWHDQQ  
AMG GP FZLUG T XTHKFD.

— ZSYZHL LSDDHADSL  
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD SO IRRESISTIBLY CONTAGIOUS AS LAUGHTER AND GOOD HUMOUR. — CHARLES DICKENS

# Drivers are stuck in limbo as world's oil supply reshuffles

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ and DAVID McHUGH  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — At a gas station outside New York City, retired probation officer Karen Stowe was faced with a pump price she didn't want to pay. She bought groceries from the convenience store instead, planning to buy cheaper gas elsewhere. "The price is so high, people have to think very hard about where they're driving to," said Stowe, who had just been volunteering at a food pantry. "People are in trouble, and that's the truth."

Though drivers in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere are getting a break from the sky-high gasoline prices they endured over the summer, the cost is still difficult for many who have been struggling with relentless inflation. The U.S. average was \$3.19 per gallon, down from a record \$5 in June, while European Union pump prices have dropped the equivalent of 55 cents, to \$6.41 per gallon, since October.

Drivers now hope the situation doesn't get worse after a series of cutbacks tied to Russia's war in Ukraine, accidents and the slowing global economy have strained the world's oil supply. While oil and gasoline prices have dropped despite a recent supply crunch, those threats could end up pushing costs higher this winter.

What's the world facing?

An EU ban on imports of most Russian oil took effect last week.

At the same time, the



Gas pumps are shown at a gas station in Frankfurt, Germany, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

Group of Seven leading democracies and 27-nation EU capped the price of Russian crude for other countries at \$60 per barrel.

There was a major leak along the Keystone pipeline in the U.S., which halted oil shipments along a major corridor.

Dozens of oil tankers were stuck in Turkey for days.

The OPEC+ coalition of oil producers has cut back production.

"The global system can withstand probably a few more days of these outages, but if they persist, they're going to play a major role in price hikes," said Claudio Galimberti, senior vice president of analysis at Rystad Energy.

A key reason restrictions on oil supply have not sent prices higher: Traders think there will be less demand for oil in the future, due to fears that the global economy is headed into recession, which would mean less driving and manufacturing. And some investors

worry China's looser COVID-19 restrictions could backfire for the nation's economy.

"It can quickly turn into a major COVID wave which engulfs the hospitals and then is going to have a worse effect on demand than COVID policy," Galimberti said.

The restrictions on Russian exports are likely to have a bigger impact on oil prices next month.

Although Western nations have banned Russian oil, customers in India and China are buying it, so there's enough oil on the market for those who need it. More than 97% of Russia's seaborne crude exports went to China and India last month, according to Refinitiv, a financial market data provider.

"We do not ask our companies to buy Russian oil. We ask them to buy oil," Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaisankar said in Parliament last week. "But it is a sensible policy to go where we get the best deal in the interest of Indian people, and that's exactly what we are trying to do."

In February, global oil supply could get more limited, because European nations won't be able to buy Russian refined products such as gasoline and diesel, so Russia could cut back on producing oil. □

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# Satellite launched to map the world's oceans, lakes, rivers

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
AP Aerospace Writer

A U.S.-French satellite that will map almost all of the world's oceans, lakes and rivers rocketed into orbit Friday.

The predawn launch aboard a SpaceX rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California capped a highly successful year for NASA.

Nicknamed SWOT short for Surface Water and Ocean Topography the satellite is needed more than ever as climate change worsens droughts, flooding and coastal erosion, according to scientists. Cheers erupted at control centers in California and France as the spacecraft started its mission.

"It is a pivotal moment, and I'm very excited about it," said NASA program scientist Nadya Vinogradova-Shiffer. "We're going to see Earth's water like we've never before."

About the size of a SUV, the satellite will measure the height of water on more than 90% of Earth's surface, allowing scientists to track the flow and identify potential high-risk areas. It will also survey millions of lakes as well as 1.3 million miles (2.1 million kilometers) of rivers.

The satellite will shoot radar pulses at Earth, with the signals bouncing back to be received by a pair of antennas, one on each end of a 33-foot (10-meter) boom.

It should be able to make out currents and eddies less than 13 miles (21 kilometers) across, as well as areas of the ocean where water of varying temperatures merge.

NASA's current fleet of nearly 30 Earth-observing satellites cannot make out such slight features. And while these older satellites can map the extent of lakes and rivers, their measurements are not as detailed, said the University of North Carolina's Tamlin Pavelsky, who is part of the mission.



A SpaceX rocket carrying the Surface Water and Ocean Topography satellite lifts off from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, Friday, Dec. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

Perhaps most importantly, the satellite will reveal the location and speed of rising sea levels and the shift of coastlines, key to saving lives and property. It will cover the globe between the Arctic and Antarctica at least once every three weeks, as it orbits more than 550 miles (890 kilometers) high. The mission is expected to last three years. Laurie Leshin, the director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, noted that while

the agency is known for its Mars rovers and space telescopes, "this is the planet we care most about."

"We've got a lot of eyes on Earth," with even more globe-surveying missions planned in the next few years, she added.

NASA and the French Space Agency collaborated on the \$1.2 billion SWOT project some 20 years in the making with Britain and Canada chipping in. Already recycled, the first-stage booster returned to

Vandenberg eight minutes after liftoff to fly again one day. When the double sonic booms sounded, "Everybody jumped out of their skin, and it was exhilarating. What a morning," said Taryn Tomlinson, an Earth science director at the Canadian Space Agency. □

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## Micah Parsons made valid point about Jalen Hurts, MVP debate

By **ROB MAADDI**  
AP Pro Football Writer

Micah Parsons took a lot of heat this week for expressing an opinion many people share.

The Dallas Cowboys' star linebacker said the Philadelphia Eagles are 12-1 more because of the overall talent on the team than Jalen Hurts. The Eagles' third-year quarterback is a frontrunner for NFL Most Valuable Player entering Week 15.

Speaking on Von Miller's podcast, Parsons pointed out the Eagles have an excellent defense and superb players on offense around Hurts. "It's system and team!" Parsons said about the credit. He's not wrong. The Eagles have the league's most dominant offensive line. A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith are among the best wide receiver tandems. The rushing attack led by Miles Sanders is outstanding. And, coach Nick Sirianni and offensive coordinator Shane Steichen have devised an offensive scheme that maximizes



Dallas Cowboys linebacker Micah Parsons sits on the bench during the first half of an NFL football game against the Minnesota Vikings, Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

Hurts' skills and helped him elevate his all-around game.

Parsons also argued that Patrick Mahomes would be his MVP choice because he's having another tremendous season for the Kansas City Chiefs without star wide receiver Tyreek

Hill, who was traded to Miami. Of course, some Eagles fans took offense to Parsons' comments. Others considered his words a compliment for the team. Hurts and his teammates, to their credit, refused to engage. The Eagles and Cowboys face each other

in Dallas on Christmas Eve. Parsons provided plenty of fodder for talks shows and reporters by openly sharing his thoughts. He didn't do his team any favors by giving Hurts and the Eagles bulletin-board material for next week's game. Then again, players shouldn't

need extra motivation to play their best, especially in a rivalry game that could have playoff implications. The Cowboys (10-3) still have a shot at the NFC East.

The conversation between Parsons and Miller about Hurts and other MVP candidates is a similar debate voters are having. With four games remaining, it's a close race between Hurts and Mahomes with Joe Burrow and Josh Allen also in the mix. Tua Tagovailoa could enter the discussion with spectacular finish. Hill and Justin Jefferson deserve consideration, though a non-quarterback hasn't won the award since Adrian Peterson in 2012.

Hurts has made a dramatic leap in his second full season as Philadelphia's starter. He led the team to a 9-8 record and a playoff appearance last season but the front office still had questions about his ability to be a franchise QB and considered trading for Russell Wilson and other proven starters. □

## Brittney Griner says she'll play basketball in Arizona again



Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner sits during the first half of Game 2 of basketball's WNBA Finals against the Chicago Sky, Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

By **DOUG FEINBERG**  
AP Basketball Writer

Brittney Griner said she's "grateful" to be back in the United States and plans on playing basketball again next season for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury. Her comments came a week after she was released from a Russian prison, freed in a

dramatic high-level prisoner exchange.

"It feels so good to be home!" Griner posted to Instagram on Friday in her first public statement since her release. "The last 10 months have been a battle at every turn. I dug deep to keep my faith and it was the love from so many of

you that helped keep me going. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to everyone for your help."

Griner was arrested in February in Russia on drug-related charges and was later convicted and sentenced to nine years in a Russian jail. After months of strained negotiations, and an extraordinarily rare public revelation by the Biden administration that it had made a "substantial proposal" to bring home Griner and another detained American, Paul Whelan, the case resolved last week with a prisoner swap in which the WNBA star was exchanged in the United Arab Emirates for Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout. "President Biden, you brought me home and I know you are committed to bringing Paul Whelan and all Americans home too," Griner said. "I will use my platform to do whatever

I can to help you. I also encourage everyone that played a part in bringing me home to continue their efforts to bring all Americans home. Every family deserves to be whole."

Whelan's brother David said last week in a statement that he was "so glad" for Griner's release but also disappointed for his family. He credited the White House with giving the Whelan family advance notice and said he did not fault officials for making the deal. "The Biden administration made the right decision to bring Ms. Griner home, and to make the deal that was possible, rather than waiting for one that wasn't going to happen," he said.

Griner also thanked the military staff and medical team in Texas, where she was receiving care after returning to the U.S. last week. She wrote that she would

"transition home to enjoy the holidays with my family" but did not say where.

While WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said she was going to give Griner all the time she needed to decide whether she wanted to play basketball again, Griner made it clear that: "I intend to play basketball for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury this season, and in doing so, I look forward to being able to say 'thank you' to those of you who advocated, wrote, and posted for me in person soon." "Amazing timing for her to be home before the holidays," Engelbert told the AP in an interview Thursday. "It's a great story for all who know her."

The Mercury open the season on the road against the Los Angeles Sparks on May 19. The team's first home game is two days later against the Chicago Sky. □

# We could do without 3rd-place game, all these bowls

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
AP Sports Columnist

As the World Cup holds a game to decide third place — who cares? — and a tidal wave of unnecessary bowl games gets cranked up — really, who cares? — we're reminded that sports, as great as they can be, have a few things we could definitely do without.

Modern pentathlon, anyone?

We'll get back to that befuddling sport in a moment. For now, let's focus on a World Cup game of zero significance Saturday between Morocco and Croatia, plus the first of 42 major college bowls — only three of which mean anything — being played Friday in a country (the Bahamas) that has no real affinity for American-style football.

Morocco made a stunning run at the World Cup, becoming the first African team to reach the semifinals while sparking joyous celebrations in the Arab world and beyond.

For all intents and purposes, that electrifying performance ended with a 2-0 loss to defending world champion France in the semifinals Wednesday. The Moroccans should be at home now, reveling in the adulation of an appreciative nation.

Instead, they'll be back on the pitch one more time in Qatar, deciding the tour-



Morocco's Yahia Attiyat Allah consoles a teammate at the end of the World Cup semifinal soccer match between France and Morocco at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor, Qatar, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022.

ament's third-best team when they face a Croatian squad that lost to Argentina 3-0 in the other semifinal. The players tried to act like this means something. Trust us, it doesn't.

Morocco and Croatia will long be remembered for making it to the semis. The winner of the third-place game is sure to be quickly forgotten.

Morocco coach Walid Regragui summed it up best. "You are so disappointed," he said. "You've just lost a semifinal and then two days later, you have to go back out there."

Of course, when it comes

to worthless contests, nothing beats the college football bowl system.

Four teams — Georgia, Michigan, TCU and Ohio State — have berths in the College Football Playoff. The Peach and Fiesta semifinals, followed by the national championship game, are the only major-college postseason games that matter.

Yet, over the next 2 1/2 weeks, there will be 39 more — essentially serving as huge bloc of holiday programming for ESPN and a few other networks, as monotonous and insignificant as all those Hallmark

Christmas movies.

In a match-up of 6-6 teams that had never faced each other before and had little reason to travel to the Bahamas for their first meeting, UAB held on for what was admittedly a thrilling 24-20 victory over Miami of Ohio.

Beyond all the whooping and hollering from the players, the reaction to a game-winning tackle just short of the goal line was silence.

The stadium appeared to be largely empty, as it should have been.

At least UAB and Miami got to enjoy a week in para-

dise.

Other bowls are set for decidedly non-paradise locales such as Boise, Idaho; Shreveport, Louisiana; Fort Worth, Texas; and Montgomery, Alabama.

Why?

While we're at it, here's a few other things we should sweep into the dustpan of sports history:

— The aforementioned modern pentathlon, which somehow remains an Olympic event even though only a few dozen people in the entire world seem to know what it is. We're told it has something to do with mimicking the skills needed by a pre-20th century soldier: shooting, sword fighting, swimming, running and riding a horse. The riding part appears on the way out after a coach — apparently a fan of "Blazing Saddles" — was accused of punching a horse at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Here's a better idea: Let's just get rid of the whole sport.

— Roman gladiators are no longer a thing, which we can all agree is a good thing, right? There's no need in a modern, supposedly civilized world for the "sport" (yep, I'm doing air quotes) of MMA, which is essentially two people in a cage attempting to beat each other to a bloody pulp, break someone's arm or choke the other fighter into unconsciousness. □

Associated Press

## NFL Honors awards show to be hosted by Kelly Clarkson

By The Associated Press

Musical artist Kelly Clarkson will host the 12th annual NFL Honors awards show Feb. 9 in Phoenix, recognizing the league's best players, performances and plays from the 2022 season.

The Emmy and Grammy-award winning artist will be the first woman to host the show, where multiple NFL awards will be announced, a spokesperson said Friday in a new release.

The NFL Honors show debuted in 2012 and features the announcement of The Associated Press' annual

awards, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award, and the newest Pro Football Hall of Fame class, among others.

The show is held annually the week before the Super Bowl. Past hosts include Keegan-Michael Key, Steve Harvey, Alec Baldwin, Seth Meyers, Rob Riggle and Conan O'Brien. The show will air live at 9 p.m. EST from Symphony Hall. It will be carried by NBC, NFL Network and Peacock.

A list of the awards that will be announced:

- AP Most Valuable Player
- AP Coach of the Year
- AP Comeback Player of the Year
- AP Offensive Player of the Year
- AP Defensive Player of the Year
- AP Offensive Rookie of the Year
- AP Defensive Rookie of the Year
- AP Assistant Coach of the Year
- Best Moment of the Year
- Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year
- NFL Inspire Change Tribute
- Pro Football Hall of Fame



Musical artist Kelly Clarkson smiles on the Hollywood Walk of Fame during a ceremony in her honor on Monday, Sept. 19, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Class of 2022

- FedEx Air & Ground Players of the Year
- Salute to Service Award
- Bud Light Celly of the Year

- Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award

- NFL Fan of the Year
- Deacon Jones Sack Leader Award □

# Weekly SPECIALS



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Mexican Rib Eye Bone In

WAS \$12.68

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Grapes Black Seedless 3lb

WAS \$12.68

**\$11.42**

Each

Juan Valdez Dried Freeze Assorted 95gr

WAS \$10.28

**\$8.57**

Each

Blue Ribbon Assorted Icecream 128oz

WAS \$9.71

**\$6.28**

Per KG

Chicken Breast Rollade

WAS \$5.66

**\$5.14**

Per KG

Whole Chicken for Soup

WAS \$3.59

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Per Bag

Clementines 3LB

WAS \$3.59

**\$3.14**

Per KG

Eru Prestige Cheese Spread 100gr

WAS \$2.79

**\$2.11**

Each

EE Traditional Pasta Sauce 24oz

WAS \$12.57

**\$11.42**

Each

Ponche Crema Dakota 700ml

WAS \$2.28

**\$1.71**

Each

Gwoon Krenten 250gr

WAS \$6.79

**\$5.88**

Each

Post Honey Bunch Oat Almond 14.5oz

WAS \$15.25

**\$11.99**

Each

Aceite De Soya Crisol 64oz

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**\$1.82**

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**HBC/GM**

WAS \$6.85

**\$5.71**

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Irish Spring Moisture Blast 20oz

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